



For Immediate Release
Thursday, February 27, 2003
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NEWS RELEASE

Undiagnosed Diabetes Targeted by New Awareness Campaign

Free Diabetes Testing will be Available Statewide

(Salt Lake City, UT) – Know the warning signs of diabetes – that’s the message of a new public awareness campaign the Utah Department of Health Diabetes Prevention and Control Program (DPCP) will launch in March, 2003.

The campaign aims to reduce the number of Utahns with undiagnosed diabetes by increasing knowledge of the risk factors and symptoms of the disease. Television and radio ads will encourage the public to get screened for diabetes at free clinics throughout Utah in March.

According to the DPCP, about 40,000 Utahns don’t know they have diabetes, and the disease is slowly affecting their bodies. If left untreated or uncontrolled, diabetes can cause heart attack, stroke, blindness, amputation, kidney disease and other serious complications.

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"Complications from uncontrolled or untreated diabetes affects thousands of Utahns every year," said Nancy Neff, DPCP manager. "A simple increase in testing and a correlating decrease in undiagnosed diabetes could significantly reduce complications and improve many lives."

The public awareness campaign targets all Utahns, but places special emphasis on those 45 and older, those who are already at a high risk for diabetes, as well as those who will soon be at high risk. Risk factors for diabetes include:

- Older than 45
- Overweight
- Family history
- Ethnic descent
- Women who have had a baby weighing more than nine pounds at birth

Neff reminds Utahns that even those not at high risk can get diabetes. She says to watch for the warning signs: blurry vision, tingling or numbness in the hands or feet, constant fatigue, frequent thirst and frequent urination.

To help encourage all Utahns to get screened for diabetes, the DPCP, American Diabetes Association (ADA) and area health care providers and organizations have partnered to provide and promote free diabetes screenings throughout Utah during March ALERT. Call the Utah Department of Health Resource Line at 1-888-222-2542 or the ADA at 1-888-DIABETES for a list of screening dates, times and locations.

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